

## IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please replace the first paragraph on page 3 with the following:

While the disclosures referred to above are interesting, they do not provide any teaching as to the structural features of the polymer absorbent. Also, no teaching is provided for synthesizing a solvent absorbing covalently ~~cross-linked~~ cross-linked polymer gel. Whereas the disclosures of the above references have used a commercial polymer, in the present invention the polymer gel is prepared *in situ* by polymerizing selected monomers which contain a proper balance of hydrophilic and hydrophobic character in the presence or absence of a suitable transition metal compound. The proper choice of monomers containing hydrophilic and hydrophobic functional groups is particularly necessary for absorption of C<sub>1</sub> to C<sub>6</sub> alcohol and their mixtures, without the need for presence of water. Also in the prior art, the gels prepared inevitably required additional gels in order to increase the viscosity thereof.